

nih record



ABOVE • Dog days of summer? NIH observes National Night Out with daytime safety event. See more photos, p. 12.

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'Scientific Leader...Leader in Society'

NIH Pays Tribute to NHGRI Director Collins

By Geoff Spencer

Music and laughter rang out from Natcher auditorium recently as NIH gathered to honor Dr. Francis Collins, who officially stepped down as director of the National Human Genome Research Institute on Aug. 1.

Since assuming the helm of NHGRI in 1993, the physician-geneticist has become internationally recognized for his leadership of the Human Genome Project and the subsequent launch of many scientific endeavors to understand the human genome sequence and improve the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of disease. Collins also supported research into the ethical, legal and social issues related to genomics research and strongly advocated the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act, which was re-



NHGRI director Dr. Francis Collins (l) accepts distinguished alumnus award from NIH director Dr. Elias Zerhouni.

SEE COLLINS, PAGE 4



Intern Ross Noble discusses two of his sculptures.

Foiled Again...and Again

Summer Intern Creates Novel Sculptures

By Carla Garnett

G.I. Joe and his comrades were MIA. That's how Ross Noble, then age 4, began his career as a sculptor. While his youth may have suggested he use Play-Doh for a medium, he employed something far handier: aluminum foil.

"It was summer and our family was spending a week or so in Ocean City," Noble explains. "And I had forgotten my G.I. Joe action figures at home. I was bored and rambunctious

Give Me a Break! Campus Refuges And Quiet Nooks

By Belle Waring

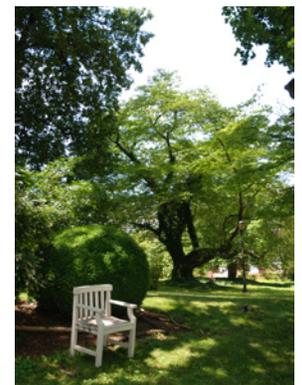
Hey, you're not getting paid to goof off.

Or are you?

If you ask why rest is essential to human health, you won't get a short answer. For starters, if you focus on the role rest plays in the workplace, research shows that even short breaks can reduce error and improve performance.

Moreover, if you don't take a breather, repeated activities such as typing or pipetting can put you at risk for repetitive motion injury. Experts agree: stretching can help. Even a mini-walk favors your health.

As for the power nap, it improves memory and productivity, but...sleeping on the job? Problematic.



The grounds of the Lasker Center, Bldg. 60



The NIH Record is published biweekly at Bethesda, MD by the Editorial Operations Branch, Office of Communications and Public Liaison, for the information of employees of the National Institutes of Health, Department of Health and Human Services. The content is reprintable without permission. Pictures may be available upon request. Use of funds for printing this periodical has been approved by the director of the Office of Management and Budget through September 30, 2008.

To receive alerts to our latest issue, send an email to listserv@list.nih.gov with the words "Subscribe NIHRECORD" in the message body.

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briefs

NIH Institute Relay Now Recruiting Teams

The 25th NIH Institute Challenge Relay—sponsored by the R&W Association, members of the original NIH Health's Angels and the ORS Division of Amenities and Transportation Services—is set for Thursday, Sept. 18 at 11:30 a.m. in front of Bldg. 1. The relay consists of 5-person teams, with each member running a 1/2-mile loop around Bldg. 1. Employees and contractors from all institutes and centers are welcome to enter as many teams as they wish. Teams must include men and women, with at least two runners of the same sex. Winning teammates will have their names added to the Allen Lewis NIH Memorial Trophy on display at the Bldg. 31 Fitness Center. Now's the time to assemble your team(s) and create that unique moniker everyone will remember. The entry fee is \$10 per team. Email your group leader name, team name and participants to schoolsr@ors.od.nih.gov. In addition, volunteers to help with the race can contact David Browne or Julie Harris at (301) 496-6061 or email nihrw@ors.od.nih.gov.

FAES Graduate School Opens House, Aug. 26

Join FAES for its fall 2008 semester Graduate School Open House on Tuesday, Aug. 26 from 4 to 7 p.m. at FAES House, 9101 Old Georgetown Rd. (across from the fire station). Refreshments will be served and registration for the fall 2008 semester will be accepted. Walk-in registration will be held Sept. 2-9 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. (extra hours Monday, Sept. 8, from 5 to 7 p.m.) in Bldg. 60 (the Cloisters), Rm. 236 & 237.

Register for Clinical Research Course

Registration for the 2008-2009 Introduction to the Principles and Practice of Clinical Research course has begun. The course will run from Oct. 27 through Mar. 17, 2009. Classes will be held on campus on Monday and Tuesday evenings from 5 to approximately 6:30. There is no charge for the course; the textbook *Principles and Practice of Clinical Research*, Second Edition is suggested as supplemental information. A certificate will be awarded upon successful completion of the course, which is based on a final exam.

Approximately 833 students registered for the 2007-2008 course, which was also broadcast to 17 domestic and international locations. For more information or to register, visit www.cc.nih.gov/training/training/ippcr.html or call the NIH Office of Clinical Research Training and Medical Education at (301) 496-9425. Deadline to register is Friday, Oct. 17. Email confirmation

will be sent to those accepted into the program. For reasonable accommodation to participate, call at least 7 business days before the event.

NCI Cohosts Meeting on Biomedical Informatics

Biomedical Informatics Without Borders, a joint conference of the National Cancer Institute and the U.K. National Cancer Research Institute, will be held Sept. 2-3. Organized by the NCI cancer Biomedical Informatics Grid (caBIG) initiative and the NCRI Informatics Initiative, the meeting will highlight global grid initiatives and tools that are changing the biomedical research landscape through shared data, technologies and collaboration. There will be sessions for both technical and scientific audiences. Whether your focus is biomedical informatics development or the use of these tools for basic and clinical research problems, you will find resources and potential collaborators to help you work more effectively. The meeting will be held at the Hyatt Regency Bethesda. For more information and to register, visit <https://cabig.nci.nih.gov/nci-ncrizoo8conference>. Registration is free and open to the public.

Cancer Prevention Fellowship

The Cancer Prevention Fellowship Program (CPFP) at the National Cancer Institute is accepting applications for 2009 fellows from now through Sept. 1. It offers training toward an M.P.H. degree at an accredited university during the first year, followed by mentored research with NCI investigators. The CPFP provides competitive stipends, paid health insurance, reimbursement for moving expenses and a travel allowance to attend scholarly meetings or training. The typical duration in the CPFP is 4 years. To be eligible, applicants must possess an M.D., Ph.D., J.D., or other doctoral degree in a related discipline. Applicants must also be U.S. citizens or permanent residents. To learn more visit <http://cancer.gov/prevention/pob> or contact cpfpcordinator@mail.nih.gov.

Parenting Seminars Target Back-to-School

A series of free parenting workshops will be held in September to address age-specific issues as kids go back to school. All are held on Wednesdays from noon to 1 p.m. in Bldg. 50, Rm. 1227. On Sept. 3, "Preschool through Grade School" will be presented by Sue Cohen. On Sept. 10, speaker Hazel Osborn will discuss "Middle School." And on Sept. 17, a presentation titled "High School" will be offered by Fred Evans. Those needing reasonable accommodation to participate should contact Tonya Lee at (301) 402-8180. The talks are sponsored by the NIH child care board and the Division of Amenities and Transportation Services, ORS, and are available via videocast at <http://videocast.nih.gov>.

nih record

Grad School Fair Attracts Crowd

On July 10, the NIH Graduate and Professional School Fair, organized by the Office of Intra-mural Training and Education (OITE), drew a crowd of more than 800 postbacs and summer students eager to explore their options for higher education at workshops and through interactions with representatives from 93 different schools from across the country.

This was the first event of its kind put on by NIH and the response from attendees was positive. “It was hard to believe that this was the first NIH graduate school fair,” said Chris Vockley, an NHGRI postbac who used the fair as an opportunity to talk to admissions counselors from his top three choices of Ph.D. programs. Javier Cabrera-Perez, a postbac from NIDCR, is hoping that the fair is not only resurrected next year, but goes on to suggest that “the OITE should make it mandatory, or at least allow students to be excused from work.”

Organizers were enthusiastic enough to fly students from the Rocky Mountain Laboratories in Montana to join the crowd of attendees drawn from on-campus labs and research centers in Rockville and Baltimore. The event attracted admissions counselors representing schools from as far away as the University of Alaska, Fairbanks.

The fair was housed in the Natcher Conference Center and had events all day. The morning was split into two tracks of workshops aimed at preparing students for applying to either graduate or professional schools. Attendees had a chance to learn techniques for writing personal statements and prepare for the admissions process with a mock interview. Also available was a short session titled “M.D./Ph.D: Is it for you?”

After a cookout lunch, postbacs and summer students had 4 hours to talk to admissions counselors at tables set up around the conference center. Schools represented included small professional schools, enormous state schools and Ivy League universities. Students were generally pleased by the variety, but Nick Malecek, a postbac from NIMH, was disappointed by the lack of neuroscience graduate programs represented. “The fair seemed aimed more at the M.D./Ph.D. crowd,” he said.

Organizers Shirley Forehand and Debbie Cohen and OITE director Dr. Sharon Milgram are enthusiastic about the turnout and response to the event and have expressed a desire to repeat it in 2009 with even greater success.—Eric Schaffer



NIH Take Your Child to Work Day—Part 2

The National Cancer Institute at Frederick and Fort Detrick hosted their 12th annual “Take Your Child to Work Day” on July 30 to accommodate employees who could not attend the NIH event in April.

Organized by NCI employees and supported by the Office of Equal Opportunity and Diversity Management, the event registered more than 250 children. While learning what their parents do in a day, children participated in a wide variety of exciting career activities—science and non-science related—such as “From DNA to Mice” and the “Traditional and Modern Carpentry Tools.” They experienced cutting-edge technology and learned about important research in sessions such as the ever-popular “Come See What’s Inside.” In that session, a small animal imaging program uses the latest technology to look internally at the progression of tumors in research mice.

In addition, the NIH Diversity Council presented the “Art of Diversity,” which engaged children to discuss and draw their perceptions of diversity as it relates to their own family and NIH. The children’s artwork will be presented in the second annual NIH “A Time for Diversity” held the first week in December 2008 at the Clinical Center.

To read more about NCI’s Take Your Child to Work Day, visit <http://kidsday.ncifcrf.gov/>.—Pamela Oliver

Above:

Youngsters display their “Art of Diversity” creations.

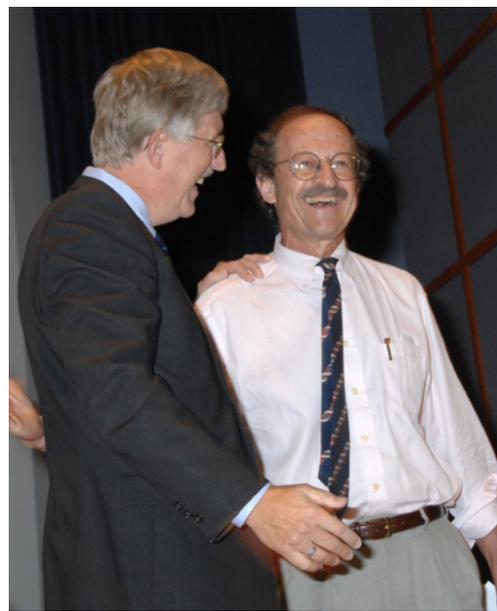
Below:

Young visitors look into “Why Plants Get Sick.”

Bottom:

“From DNA to Mice” session draws children to lab work.





COLLINS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Top, l:

Those were the days—The Directors rock band includes (from l) Dr. John Tisdale, Dr. Stephen Katz, Collins and Dr. Elias Zerhouni.

Top, r:

Former NIH director Dr. Harold Varmus (r) congratulates Collins at his send-off.

Below:

Former Congressman John Porter (r) wishes Collins well.

PHOTOS: BILL BRANSON



cently signed into law. After NIH, Collins will explore writing and other professional opportunities. He also plans to continue working closely with his intramural laboratory as an unpaid special volunteer a few days each week.

The celebration brought together employees from across the agency, as well as family, friends, patient advocates and former and current members of Congress. While many came to recognize his legacy to science, they were also there to celebrate and share the personal experiences they'd had with Collins over the years. Often mentioned were his renowned ability to communicate science to the average person; his gift for bringing together impressive groups of researchers to tackle large and complex scientific projects; and his capacity for listening to and considering the ideas of others.

NIH director Dr. Elias Zerhouni presented Collins a "Distinguished NIH Alumnus" award, a miniature version of a sculpture on view in the Clinical Center by Azriel Awret called "Healing Waters." "Francis really has exemplified what I think the modern scientist should be—not only a scientific leader, but also a leader in society, a leader for the public's interest," Zerhouni said.

Other speakers included former NIH director Dr. Harold Varmus, current president of Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center; NHLBI director Dr. Elizabeth Nabel; NIMH director Dr. Thomas Insel; former Congressman John Porter, who serves as vice chair of the Foundation for the National Institutes of Health; and Rep. Louise Slaughter (D-NY).

Sen. Tom Harkin (D-IA) sent a video message, which contained a moving description of Collins. "I have never come across a researcher more optimistic about how the fruits of research can

ease illness, disease and suffering," Harkins said. "In all the years I've known him, I've never ended a conversation with him without feeling smarter and more hopeful for the future."

In keeping with Collins's love of music and laughter, the event included a rare performance by The Directors, a rock band that includes NIAMS director Dr. Stephen Katz (guitar); Zerhouni (keyboards); NCI's Dr. Steve Libutti (drums); NIAMS's Dr. John O'Shea (guitar, mandolin); and NHLBI's Dr. John Tisdale (bass guitar). They dedicated two "original" compositions to Collins. The first, sung to the tune of Jimmy Buffett's *Margaritaville*, featured the appropriate chorus: "Taking a break away from NIH-a-ville." The other song was set to the Stevie Wonder classic, *I Just Called to Say I Love You*, but the lyrics had been changed to "We're Just Here to Show We Love You." For a grand finale, Collins, known as the "singing geneticist," grabbed his guitar and joined the band to sing lead vocals on Mary Hopkins's 1960's hit *Those Were the Days*.

Reflecting upon his 15 years at NIH, Collins said, "I will say what an amazing ride it has been to be part of an adventure, an adventure into ourselves, to understand our own instruction book...to chart a course towards a change in medicine for the better. For me, as a scientist and a physician, there could never have been a more exciting opportunity than this has been, and it has been only possible because of the amazing people I've had the chance to work with...My heart is full of gratitude on this remarkable day."

A video of the event is available on the NHGRI web site at www.genome.gov/Media/. 12

CIT Updates Training Program

The CIT Computer Training Program has announced courses for its summer term, which is open for another month:

Seminars for Scientists

- Statistical Analysis of Microarray Data
- mAdb topics
- Genomatix, Phylogenetics series
- Structural Biology series
- AFNI Bootcamp
- QUOSA

Statistics

- SPSS 16.0—What's New
- SAS 9.2—What's New
- JMP Tips & Tricks
- JMP Genomics

Grants

- QVR (intro, intermediate and advanced)
- Introduction to Categorizing NIH Research with the Research Condition and Disease Categorization (RCDC) System

IT Professionals

- ITIL V3 Foundations—Overview
- ADM/Active Role
- NIH IT Enterprise Architecture
- Business Process Modeling
- Wiki Tutorial
- Home Networking Fundamentals
- Working from Home—Understand the Technologies
- Data Center Tours – Division of Computer System Services
- Spend a Day with the Help Desk

Personal Computers

- 5 new sessions of Office 2007—What's New
- Excel
- PowerPoint
- BlackBerry Tips and Tricks
- Getting to Know Windows Vista
- Basic PC Skills for NIH
- Windows XP Tips and Tricks
- Windows XP Tips and Tricks for System Administrators
- Meet Your PC—What's Inside the Box

The training program has been updated and some of its processes have changed. For instance, after attending courses you will now receive completion certificates by email. Most CIT classes are free of charge to NIH staff. While NIH employees get first priority, contractors are welcome to attend when space is available, the class is related to their NIH work and they have approval from their NIH supervisor.

To obtain full course information, register for

classes, join the CIT Training mailing list and check out your transcript or application status, visit <http://training.cit.nih.gov>.

Also, are you involved in an emerging field of interest or rolling out a new or updated program? Contact CIT to help you share what you know with others.

Have questions or need information on renting computer classrooms? Contact CIT at (301) 594-6248 ext. 2 or CITTraining@mail.nih.gov.



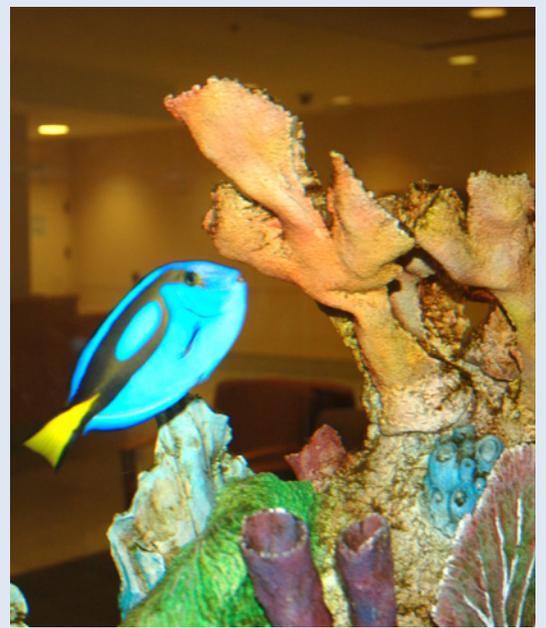
U.S., China Sign MOU on Traditional Chinese Medicine Research

HHS Secretary Michael Leavitt (r) and China's Vice Minister of Health Wang Guoqiang (c) sign a memorandum of understanding at NIH on June 16 to foster collaboration between scientists in both countries in research on integrative and traditional Chinese medicine. The signing was followed by a 2-day Traditional Chinese Medicine Research Roundtable coordinated by the National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine, NCI's Office of Cancer Complementary and Alternative Medicine and the Fogarty International Center. The roundtable featured scientific presentations by researchers and government officials from China and the United States.

NEI's McLaughlin Retires

Dr. Jack McLaughlin, deputy director of the National Eye Institute, has retired after 32 years at NIH. He held several other key positions with NEI including acting director of the institute and director of the Division of Extramural Research. "NEI has prospered under his careful attention these many years," said NEI director Dr. Paul Sieving. "I want to congratulate Jack on his exemplary service to the NEI and to NIH, as well as to the entire vision research community across the country and the world."





REFUGES

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Above, from l: The NIH chapel welcomes all; from the creekbed looking west towards Bldg. 1; the CRC aquarium's tropical beauties in 1SW's admitting area

Below, l: View from the bridge on the CRC mezzanine, looking east towards Bethesda Naval Medical Center

Below, r: If you stand in the doorway of the patient library, you'll be facing this paperback book exchange in the CRC's seventh-floor mezzanine.

PHOTOS: BELLE WARING

Need a break? Vacation hours already spent? Gas prices too high? The Bethesda campus offers tranquil areas where you can contemplate your research, your purchase order, your poster, or just clear your head.

- The 3.25-mile perimeter walk around the campus takes about an hour and is becoming a perennial favorite.
- While you're out, you may notice the blue and white signs at the limits of mowing. These mark sanctuaries for birds; 50 species have been spotted either nesting or feeding on campus. Ground nesters make their homes down in the weeds, so please don't wade in, but you can stroll along the peripheries.
- On the east side of Bldg. 33 is a wooded area bordering the creek. Under the shade of huge old willows is a footbridge where you can "watch the river flow."
- Another footbridge crosses the creek near Bldg. 21's parking lot.
- The rose garden outside Bldg. 16 (also known as the "Stone House") leads to stone benches and shady fir trees.
- The grounds of the Lasker Center, Bldg. 60, were designed for contemplation (also known as the Cloisters, the building once served as a convent).
- Do lunch *al fresco*: Outdoor picnic tables are available at various spots, including up against the fence (but near the creek) on the NLM lawn.
- Check out the Paul Rogers Plaza on the Bldg. 1 lawn; the courtyard on the west side of the CRC; the terrace between NLM (Bldg. 38) and Lister Hill (Bldg. 38A); and the plaza bordered

by Bldgs. 6B, 31C and 33. There is plenty of room to stroll or sit, never mind the whirr of rooftop air handlers.

- Turning indoors, you'll find the chapel, on the seventh floor of the CRC, "open for prayer and meditation for all."
- Next door to the chapel is the patient library, with a striking view from the seventh floor's northwest corner. While its mission is to serve patients and their families, staff too may peek in.
- The patient library also offers a paperback book exchange in the mezzanine adjacent to the chapel. Bookshelves, armchairs and coffee tables make the space conducive to reading or contemplation. This light and airy spot over-





Above: The terrace between NLM (Bldg. 38) and Lister Hill (Bldg. 38A)

Below: On the east side of Bldg. 33 is a wooded area bordering the creek where you can “watch the river flow.”

looks the CRC courtyard to the west and the atrium to the east.

- The CRC also provides similar seating areas (minus the paperbacks) on the mezzanines of floors 2 through 6. The pedestrian bridges linking the CRC to Bldg. 10 are also respite areas.

- Speaking of books, don't forget the two other libraries on campus. The NIH Library in Bldg. 10 has open stacks (open to employees, that is) and also has a new look: comfortable seating with lots of study space. NLM's two reading rooms are also open to staff, but stacks are closed. Also, in its first-floor lobby, NLM has a choice exhibition space (currently on view: an exhibit on global health). Some ICs also provide their own mini-libraries for staff.

- Watching decorative fish can be soothing. The CRC's aquarium (in a corridor off the main lobby) has some tropical beauties.

The campus abounds with opportunities for quiet contemplation. Take your next mini-“staycation” at the one nearest you.



Principal investigators meet to discuss interdisciplinary approaches to CFS.

ORWH Meeting Examines Chronic Fatigue Syndrome

Chronic fatigue syndrome (CFS) is a mysterious and debilitating disease that affects approximately 1 million to 4 million Americans. Despite years of research into CFS, the disorder remains poorly understood. The first annual meeting of “Neuroimmune Mechanisms and Chronic Fatigue Syndrome Principal Investigators” was recently held at NIH. Sponsored by the Office of Research on Women's Health, the meeting brought together grantees who are working to prove the contributions of the immune and nervous systems to CFS pathophysiology.

“We are all here to look at your findings and learn from your experiences with the goal of producing an interdisciplinary [group] of researchers who will find answers that will help patients who suffer from CFS and a host of other correlated diseases that are difficult, debilitating and frustrating,” said Dr. Eleanor Hanna, associate director for special projects and centers for ORWH. “By the time the first round of grants is completed, if not sooner, we hope researchers will be engaged in new cross-disciplinary partnerships that maximize the NIH funding investment.”

On the premise that chronic fatigue could best be understood in terms of central nervous system (CNS) functioning, ORWH sponsored a trans-NIH workshop, “Neuroimmune Mechanisms and CFS: Will Understanding CNS Mechanisms Enhance the Search for the Causes, Consequences and Treatment of CFS?” The investigators were those successful in competing for the Request for Application from a 2003 CFS workshop. The RFP produced grants funded through ORWH and administered by several NIH institutes.

PIs from across the country summarized their most recent work and participated in a team-building exercise. Discussion focused on integrating the presentations with groundbreaking work from the Hultgren Laboratory of Washington University on the hypothesis that an original infectious insult might affect and perpetuate the many symptoms of CFS.

Next steps include developing a standard toolkit, similar vocabulary and standard tests for every research participant; challenging some of the historical beliefs about the origins of CFS through the use of new technology; establishing a web site to provide open access and to share the same set of instruments with the goal of pooling data; and establishing training grants in order to encourage other investigators to enter the field.—Marsha Love

ALUMIGAMI

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

and looking for something to do. I started playing around with tin foil, making up figures and characters for my imaginary battles.”



His first efforts were pretty rough, he recalls, and not terribly artistic. But he kept at it, long after summer was over and he'd returned home. Noble started forming all kinds of animals and people, adding detail and complexity with each figure. Texture, proportion and positioning became important to him. The characters began to show movement and muscle. He named his craft “alumigami”—a combination of aluminum and the Japanese paper-folding art origami.

At age 13, his interests had matured. “I got into classical history,” he says, “and periods from the 1900s to about the fifties or sixties.” He sculpted an entire “Roman Legionnaire Cohort,” 50-some characters complete with armor and realistic weaponry. He forged Carthaginian battle scenes, featuring warriors with bow and arrow, riding elephants. He detailed tanks, rifles and tiny bullet belts. The figures, most of which stand about a foot tall, began to overtake his room and other parts of his family's home as well.

“My mom made me throw quite a few away,” he says, smiling. “I think it was that cohort series. They were starting to take up too much space.” By then he was also, in an informal way, working on commission. From biblical heroes like the winged archangel Michael to caped crusaders/video game stars like Lara Croft, from simple horses and farm animals

to prehistoric creatures like saber-tooth tigers, from Halloween costumes to birthday rose bouquets, Noble was asked by family and friends to fashion just about anything imaginable. He offers his services free of charge.

Now age 19 and a business-turned-history major at Towson University, he began working this summer as a clerk-assistant in the Office of Equal Opportunity and Diversity Management. When coworkers discovered his talent, he soon

populated their offices with alumigami: a tennis player poised to serve for one, a sword fighter brandishing a shield for another.

“He is very creative and artistic,” enthuses Carolyn Hunter, OEODM program analyst and proud owner of Noble's fencer.

Depending on the level of detail, one figure can take as few as 30 minutes to make, Noble explains. He tries to save as much tin foil as possible. “If there aren't too many accessories for a figure, I can make 6 to 8 characters per 75-foot roll of heavy-duty” Reynold's Wrap, he estimates. “I'm a real conservationist.” He begins each figure by forming a skeletal frame, which he eventually completely wraps. Individual sculptures are built in three or four layers.

“I love putting surprises in my work,” Noble admits. “Most figures are meant to be handled. The process helps with focus and dexterity.”

His most ambitious project to date—a life-size male figure he calls “Nigel”—weighs about 35 pounds. It took him 8 boxes of foil and a month to make. Once he molded the last muscle in place, he inadvertently left Nigel standing in a darkened hall of his home, where his mom—NIH's Helene Noble of the Office of Human Resources—was promptly spooked. Nigel now lives in an off-campus apartment with his creator.

Describing his pastime as “soothing and relaxing,” Noble says he never thought of it as art until other people began appreciating his creations. In a previous job as a camp counselor for the Montgomery County Recreation Center at Sligo Creek, he also discovered that his contentment with the craft can be contagious. During some down time, Noble was wracking his brain for an activity to occupy 8 or 9 energetic youngsters when inspiration suddenly hit him. He broke out the Reynold's Wrap. “I had all these little kids making tin foil figures,” he remembers. “They really got into it.”

With an estimated 2,000-plus creations to his credit, Noble now hopes to expand his current clientele beyond acquaintances. He also knows he's not the only foil sculptor on the planet. In fact, a bit of Internet surfing led him to similar crafters who sell their work. That made him realize more people might like to see his art as well.

“I'd like to get some commissions over at the Clinical Center, on some of the patient units maybe,” he says. “I just like making people happy, seeing them smile.”



Top:
Alongside OEODM program analyst Carolyn Hunter, Noble shows his special NIH sculpture featuring the agency's logo and a double helix.

Below:
The archangel Michael, in Noble's alumigami glory

milestones

NIH's Ron Geller Mourned

Dr. Ron Geller, who retired from NIH in 2002, lost his struggle with multiple myeloma on July 17. During his 33-year tenure at NIH, he participated in virtually every facet of NIH activities.

Geller first came to NIH in 1969 to conduct postdoctoral research and held a series of positions of increasing responsibility. He was chief of the Hypertension and Kidney Diseases Branch, NHLBI, in the 1970s, associate director for extramural and collaborative programs at NEI in the 1980s, and director of the Division of Extramural Affairs, NHLBI, during the 1990s. His most recent position was director, Office of Extramural Programs (OEP) in the Office of the Director.

As chief of the Hypertension and Kidney Diseases Branch, he managed a staff of more than 100 and had a portfolio that included research grants, program projects, centers, contracts, clinical trials and education research grants. He developed new application and administrative guidelines for the Hypertension Specialized Centers of Research and established collaborative research relationships between centers.

At NEI, he promoted the use of cooperative agreements to support multicenter clinical trials and expanded the institute's use of Core Center Grants and shared resources. And, while serving as director of the Division of Planning and Evaluation, OD, he conducted numerous unique analyses that had an impact on NIH policies.

Before he retired, Geller directed OEP, where he and his staff performed NIH-wide guidance and oversight for peer review policies, publication of the *NIH Guide for Grants and Contracts*, resolution of issues related to human subjects concerns, research misconduct, research training and career development programs, the Small Business Research programs and the Academic Research Enhancement Award program.

Geller's unique approaches to solving problems as well as anticipating unexpected matters gained him great respect from his colleagues, both within and outside of NIH. He is survived by his wife Lois and his daughters Andrea and Lauren.

NINDS Graduate Student Tesar Honored

Paul Tesar, a graduate student working in the NINDS Laboratory of Molecular Biology (LMB), recently received two top honors in the field of biological research—the 2008 Harold M. Weintraub Graduate Student Award and the Beddington Medal.

The Weintraub award is sponsored by the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Center and recognizes scientists for the quality, originality and significance of their biological research work. The Beddington Medal, the major award of the British Society for Developmental Biology, is presented each year to a promising young biologist for the best doctoral thesis in developmental biology.

Tesar was honored for his pioneering research on early development and embryonic stem cells. Near the beginning of his graduate work, Tesar was the sole author of a study published in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* on a new approach to derive stem cells from mouse embryos.

He came to NIH as part of the NIH-Oxford Scholars Program—an accelerated, individualized doctoral training program for outstanding science students committed to biomedical research. The program enables students to collaborate on a project in any area of biomedical research involving two mentors—one at NIH and the other at Oxford University. Tesar worked with Dr. Ron McKay, a senior investigator in the LMB, and Sir Richard Gardner, a professor in the department of zoology at Oxford, on a groundbreaking comparative study of mouse and human stem cells. The study was published in the journal *Nature*.

Tesar grew up in Eastlake, Ohio, and graduated with honors from Case Western Reserve University in 2003. He recently completed his doctorate degree. This month he will return to Case Western as a research associate in the department of genetics. ●



Older Treatment May Be Better for Saving Sight in Some with Diabetes

A new drug therapy used to treat abnormal swelling in the eye—a condition called diabetic macular edema—proved less effective than traditional laser treatments in a study funded by NEI and published online in *Ophthalmology*. The study demonstrates that laser therapy is not only more effective than corticosteroids in long-term treatment of diabetic macular edema, but also has far fewer side effects. Between 40 and 45 percent of the 18 million Americans diagnosed with diabetes have vision problems such as diabetic macular edema. This condition occurs when the center part of the eye's retina called the macula swells, possibly leading to blindness. Ophthalmologists traditionally use lasers to reduce the swelling. However, starting about 5 years ago, early reports of success in treating the condition with injections of a corticosteroid—triamcinolone—led to a rise in popularity of this alternative therapy. This is the first study to compare the long-term benefits of both treatments.

Study Suggests Improved Pain Treatments

Two chemicals associated with neurodegeneration and inflammation play important and distinct roles in development of neuropathic pain, according to a study funded in part by NINDS. The findings, reported in *Nature Medicine*, may lead to new treatments that can stop neuropathic pain from developing and alleviate it after it begins. Scientists studied how enzymes called matrix metalloproteinases (MMPs) affect the development of neuropathic pain. Previous research has shown that MMPs play important roles in the inflammation and tissue remodeling associated with some neurodegenerative diseases. Researchers studied MMP-2 and MMP-9 in rodents with a spinal nerve injury. By selectively blocking MMP-9 and MMP-2, the investigators showed that neuropathic pain responses depended on MMP-9 for the first several days after injury. MMP-2 then prompted changes that helped to maintain the pain. The study is the first to show that neuropathic pain has different phases and that the phases are controlled by different MMPs.

Scientists Develop Sensitive Salivary Sensor

For people who dislike needles, medical tests that require a drop of saliva instead of a vial of blood will one day make a trip to a doctor or dentist much easier. But as scientists now construct the first of these saliva tests for early signs of cancer and other diseases, they continue to push the technological envelope in interesting ways. As published in *Biosensors and Bioelectronics*, a team of researchers supported by NIDCR report they have developed an ultra-sensitive optical protein sensor, a first for a salivary diagnostic test. The sensor can be integrated into a specially designed lab-on-a-chip, or microchip assay, and preprogrammed to bind a specific protein of interest, generating a sustained fluorescent signal as the molecules attach. A microscope then reads the intensity of the fluorescent light—a measure of the protein's cumulative concentration in the saliva sample—and scientists gauge whether it corresponds with levels linked to developing disease. In their initial experiments, the scientists primed the optical protein sensor to detect the IL-8 protein, which at higher than normal concentration in saliva is linked to oral cancer. Using saliva samples from 20 people—half healthy, the others diagnosed with oral cancer—the sensor correctly distinguished in all cases between health and disease.

New Study Results Explain How Dormant Tumor Cells Become Active Later

Scientists using a three-dimensional cell culture system have identified a mechanism by which dormant, metastatic tumor cells can begin growing again after long periods of inactivity. Results of the NCI study appeared in the Aug. 1 *Cancer Research*. The new findings indicate that the switch from dormancy to proliferative, metastatic growth may be regulated, in part, through signaling from the surrounding microenvironment. Targeting this mechanism may also provide strategies for inhibiting the switch from dormancy to proliferation. Recurrence of breast cancer often follows a long latent period in which there are no signs of cancer; metastases may not become clinically apparent until many years after removal of the primary tumor and follow-up therapy. According to one study leader, NCI's Dr. Jeffrey Green, "Recent evidence suggests that, in many cases, tumor cells have already seeded metastatic sites even when the primary tumor is diagnosed at an early stage." Approximately 30 percent of breast cancer patients diagnosed with early-stage disease have been found to have breast cancer cells in their bone marrow. However, these cells seem to exist primarily as micrometastases that do not manifest themselves clinically in any way.—compiled by Carla Garnett



A new drug therapy used to treat abnormal swelling in the eye—diabetic macular edema—has proven less effective than traditional laser treatments.



The phone numbers for more information about the studies below are 1-866-444-2214 (TTY 1-866-411-1010) unless otherwise noted.

Dry Mouth

Do you have dry mouth after treatment for head and neck cancer? Participate in an NIH clinical research study.

Asthma Study

NIH is seeking adults 18-75 years old with asthma to participate in a research study. Compensation is provided.

Blood Count Study

Healthy African Americans or Africans 18 years and older needed for blood count study. Compensation is available.

Study of Fibroids

Women ages 25-50 suffering with fibroids are asked to consider participating in an NIH study. Compensation is provided.

Allergies in Children

NIH Pediatric Clinic offers allergy and asthma care (ages 6 months to 18 years) and is also conducting an allergy and asthma study.

Ever Have Postpartum Depression?

If you have a history of postpartum depression (PPD) following the birth of any of your children, consider participating in a PPD study with NIMH. The study seeks to examine if your PPD was caused by hormonal changes during or after pregnancy. The study is recruiting female participants between the ages of 20-45 years old. Call Linda Simpson-St. Clair, (301) 496-9576 (TTY 1-866-411-1010).

Postpartum Depression Study

NIMH is seeking moms who have given birth in the last 6 months and who are experiencing: low mood, sadness, or crying spells; anxiety or excessive worrying; difficulty bonding with your baby. We are conducting research studies to understand the role of your hormones in the treatment of postpartum depression. Study includes thorough evaluations and study medication at no cost. Participants should be medically healthy and not currently taking any medications. Call Linda Simpson-St. Clair, (301) 496-9576 (TTY 1-866-411-1010).

USUHS Personality Study Recruits

Would you describe yourself as adventuresome, daring and impulsive? Or are you quiet, reserved and reflective? Learn more about a personality research study at https://live.datstat.com/brain_and_personality or call (301) 295-2288. Participants will be compensated.

Former NINDS Chief Of Neurosurgery Ommaya Is Mourned

Dr. Ayub Khan Ommaya, 78, neurosurgeon and inventor, died July 10 in Islamabad, Pakistan. He had Alzheimer's disease.



Ommaya was born in Pakistan in 1930. He was the national champion swimmer of Pakistan in 1953 and received a Rhodes scholarship in 1956. A trained opera singer, he was known as the "singing neurosurgeon." He often sang before and after surgery to the delight of his patients, their families and hospital staff. He received his M.D. at King Edward Medical College in Pakistan and his M.A. from Balliol College, Oxford University.

Ommaya served as chief of neurosurgery at NINDS and clinical professor of neurosurgery at George Washington University. He developed courses and lectured on philosophy of mind, theories of consciousness and the connection between emotion, religion and science. He vigorously pursued research to better understand and develop treatments for brain tumors, traumatic brain injury and diabetes.

Prior to Ommaya's work in the 1960s, there was no effective way to deliver chemotherapy treatments to those with brain tumors. He invented the Ommaya reservoir to treat patients with aggressive brain cancer; the reservoir is a prototype for medical ports now in use. Ommaya also developed the centripetal theory of traumatic brain injury, which allowed for scientific understanding and modeling of the role of forces and their contribution to injury and outcome in the brain.

While serving as chief medical advisor to the Department of Transportation, Ommaya commissioned a report, *Injury in America*, from the Institute of Medicine in 1985. The report led to creation of CDC's National Center for Injury Prevention and Control.

Because two of his children suffer from type I diabetes, Ommaya also developed an artificial organ for diabetes driven by spinal fluid. The device was used successfully in animals, but research progress slowed when Ommaya started to show symptoms of Alzheimer's disease.

Ommaya published more than 150 scientific articles.

Survivors include his wife Ghazala Ommaya; children David, Alexander, Shana, Aisha, Iman and Sinan; siblings Jan, Jacob and Nadine; and five grandchildren.

In lieu of flowers or gifts, contributions may be sent to the Alzheimer's Association (www.alz.org), 225 N. Michigan Ave. 17th Fl. Chicago, IL 60601. For information about a memorial service, email ayubommaya@gmail.com.



Police, Fire Department Host 'NIH Day Out for Safety'

PHOTOS: CARLA GARNETT

To mark the 25th anniversary of the crime prevention campaign National Night Out, NIH Police and the NIH Fire Department held their own version of the event in front of Bldg. 1 during daytime hours on Aug. 5. Joining a number of law enforcement agencies and public safety organizations that serve NIH and its neighbors, the goal of "NIH Day Out for Safety" was to educate communities about ways to stay safe.

"America's Night Out Against Crime" was introduced in 1984 by the National Association of Town Watch, a nonprofit, crime prevention organization. By last year, the number of participants had grown to "35.4 million people in 11,310 communities in all 50 states, U.S. territories, Canadian cities and military bases worldwide," NATW says.

NIH's event incorporated demonstrations by the fire department and several police K-9 units. In addition, an NIH shuttle bus provided transportation to and from the Gateway Center for guided tours of the campus's newest visitor facility, which opens Aug. 23. According to NIH Community Policing Coordinator John Ritch, approximately 250 people attended Day Out, in addition to 80 representatives from federal, state and local law enforcement agencies, 3 local public health and safety organizations and 14 NIH components.



NIH's Community Policing Office and local radio station MIX 107.3 were among exhibitors offering giveaway items during the 2008 NIH Day Out for Safety on Aug. 5.



Clockwise from above:

Metro Transit Police K-9 handler Officer R. Wozniak and Rocky give a demonstration on explosives detection.

On hand from ORS's Division of Radiation Safety are Eric Munger (l) and Drew Cabot, both health physicists.

NIH Fire Marshal J. P. McCabe (l) of the Office of Research Services along with Assistant Fire Marshals Mike Garner (c) and David Jobses staff a display table.

Other federal and local law enforcement groups such as the Pentagon and Rockville City Police departments as well as the NIH Blood Bank and Safe Kids Buckle Up join forces for the day.

